

Notre-Dame de Montréal, Place d'Armes



• The Sulpician Seminary, the oldest building in use in Montreal, stands next to the Church and was built in 1683 by Messire Dollier de Casson (once upon a time a gallant cavalry officer of the army of Turenne) who was then Superior of the "Messieurs de Saint-Sulpice".

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• At Place d'Armes begins the adventure of Montréal . . . a stirring story opening with the colourful life of Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve. He led a group of colonists who founded Ville-Marie de Montréal in 1642. Thus did the romantic story of Montreal begin, a lonely fort in the forests hundreds of miles from any other colonist's settlement. Indians constantly threatened the first inhabitants of Ville-Marie. The white man's conquest of the St. Lawrence valley was a bitter struggle, culminating in August, 1689, in the massacre at Lachine, when the ferocious Iroquois Indians wiped out a settlement. Thence a garrison was maintained to protect the little town and in the middle of the eighteenth century Montreal had the appearance of an impregnable fortress. Visitors entered through strongly guarded gates. From watchtowers on the fortifications guards kept vigil.

• The monument to the city's founder (on opposite page) faces one of the most picturesque churches in America, Notre Dame de Montréal. The present building was completed in 1829. On important occasions the lovely tone of "Le Gros Bourdon," the largest bell in America, can be heard for miles up and down the river and echoes against the sky-scrapers which have conquered Montreal's skyline, once dominated by Notre Dame's fine towers.

• The church was originally built across the street by the famous congregation of Saint Sulpice.